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ABSTRACT

In order to foster the kind of learning environment that promotes decision-making and thinking skills, educators need to take a values approach to teaching. There are three main approaches to values teaching: (1) the product approach, which concentrates on outcomes as "fixed" values, "core" values, or "moral basics"; (2) the process approach, which uses the classroom as a context for values clarification; and (3) the integrated approach, which draws on each of the above approaches to create a moral community. The integrated approach was used in a project at a Houston, Texas, intermediate school to promote democratic and social values such as informed decision making, freedom with responsibility, justice, and a strong work ethic. Over 60 fifth-grade students were involved in the following activities: (1) classroom routines; (2) dialogue journals; (3) learning teams; (4) literature circles; (5) read alouds; (6) action research projects; and (7) school/community projects. (Figures and an appendix contain excerpts from the students' journal entries and examples of student work during the various activities.) (SW)

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Values Education in Elementary School:

A Practical Application of Research

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In order to foster the kind of learning environment that promotes democratic values such as informed decision-making, freedom with responsibility, a strong work ethic, and mediating and peace-making skills, students need to learn in a school environment that demonstrates these values and does not merely give them lip service. This could be happening in schools to a far greater extent. Why isn't it? The reasons are related both to materials and to classroom settings for learning.

First, ninety percent of our elementary school classrooms in the United States use basal texts for the teaching of reading, language arts, social studies, and science (Goodman, 1988). Although the development of some skills through the basal format may be desirable, the learning areas that suffer the most through this type of regimented skill work are the higher order questioning, decision-making, and thinking skills. Higher order thinking skills such as the ability to ask inferential questions, to compare and contrast--in general, to think critically and broadly on topics of interest and concern--are actually the outcome of curriculum that involves student choice and personal inquiry in a dynamic social learning environment (Andrews, et al, 1993; Harste, Watson, & Burke, 1989; Short & Burke, 1992). Second, this pre-packaged material often necessitates groupings, time frames, and focus on subject matter that fall short of integrated, meaningful learning (Harste, Short, and Burke, 1988; Rudman, 1984; Routman, 1988). Third, the values content (democratic and personal) of stories in basal readers is half what it was one hundred years ago in the United States (Andrews, 1994). Meaningful practice in higher order moral choices can come about through experience in learning to identify values in literature and to practice values in the classroom and in the larger community. (Gosa, 1977; Kohlberg, 1984; Andrews, 1994; Norton, 1986). We chose not to use basal texts during the year of this research, choosing rather to read and discuss on award-winning and other excellent children's literature (Andrews, 1994). We used as research models both Andrews (1994) work on exploring values through literature and inquiry and Gosa's work on identifying fictional character's decision's according to Kohlberg's stages of moral development. Before we focus on the classroom and

climate and materials, it is helpful to look at the current context in the United Stated for values education.

The Broader Context for Values Education

A brief look at the demographic trends in the status of children today (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1988) shows that in 1987 there were over 2 million reported cases of maltreatment of children, and the trend was upward; 20% of children were living below the poverty level, and the trend was upward; in 1987, it was predicted that 50% of children would experience divorce in the family by age 18 and the trend was upward. Poverty, family instability, and violence against children are increasing such that schools will need to take on the additional responsibilities of providing not only the education, counseling, and nutrition programs now available in some schools but also of fostering environments of care and nurture that become havens for the development of positive values away from an increasingly chaotic world.

Even for those families that do not suffer from violence, poverty, and instability, social factors mitigate against the development of a lived and consciously demonstrated positive values structure in the home. For example, trends in social factors (U.S. Department of Labor, 1987) indicated that the average American reads only one book in his/her lifetime after formal schooling, whereas the average American family has the television on seven hours a day, and the most-read publication is the T.V. Guide.

Even though families are working more, watching more television, and spending less "quality" time in which positive values could be taught, parents apparently do want straightforward values teaching to occur at school. A recent Gallup poll for Phi Delta Kappa showed that "developing standards of what is 'right' and 'wrong' " was second only to the number- one goal of "developing the ability to speak and write correctly" in a list of 25 educational goals ranked by parents. (Phi Delta Kappan, 64, 41-53).

Schools around the country are attempting to meet the challenge by direct teaching. According to an article in the Wall Street Journal, the schools in Clovis, California, are committed

to "an unrelenting drive to create people who know the difference between right and wrong" (Nazario, 1992). Studies at schools where values education is in full swing report successes:

> Major disciplinary problems have dropped 25% in some Los Angeles schools, for instance, after one year of using the Jefferson Center for Character Education's 10-minute daily values lessons. Another study, by Jacques S. Benninga, an education professor at California State University, Fresno, tracked the effects of Clovis's efforts over four elementary school years; children registered significant improvements in helpfulness and cooperation, and ranked higher in these areas than control groups. (Nazario, 1992, p. B6)
> Because of the current interest in teaching values in schools, we seem to have come full circle over the years of our country's history: from the direct teaching of Victorian values in the 1800s to the increasingly values-neutral stance of the mid-1900s to the current belief at the end of the 20th century that values must be *taught* to secure the stability of society. We cannot come full circle because the context of values has changed too drastically: We cannot merely return to where we were 150 years ago.

The first issue in the teaching of values in school is the approach. A review of the literature shows that there are three main approaches to values teaching.

Approaches to Teaching Values

Across the spectrum of values from traditional to futuristic and the methods used to teach them, from incidental discussion to packaged programs, we can organize the typical instructional approaches under two headings: the "process" and the "product" approaches to values education. Today, because the teaching of traditional moral values has declined to a smaller percentage of the selections in children's readers, and is accomplished in more subtle ways, efforts are afoot to return to the more didactic teaching of moral values through "product" approaches, e. g., the recent popularity of the McGuffey readers. The "product" is the outcome, namely, the inculcation or learning of particular values.

1. A Product Approach: Core Values Through Direct Teaching

Some researchers and theorists in moral education refer to the specific products or outcomes of values education as "fixed" values, "core" values, or "moral basics." They believe that a consensus prevails about central values, such as "respect" and "responsibility" "that can be conveyed to children without hesitation." (Pritchard, 1988). Goble & Brooks (1983) site groups, such as the American Institute for Character Education which developed the *Character Education*

Curriculum based on values gleaned from a worldwide study of values sytems. In this study, fifteen basic values were identified as shared by all major cultures and world religions: **courage, conviction generosity, kindness, helpfulness, honesty, honor, justice, tolerance, and sound use of time and talents, freedom of choice, freedom of speech, good citizenship, the right to be an individual, and the right of equal opportunity** (p. 88).

Goble and Brooks further cite twelve values embodied in a code of behavior developed by the Thomas Jefferson Research Center which "when properly defined, understood, and practiced, can lead to health, happiness, and success for the individual and society." (p. 89) Those values are: **wisdom, integrity, love, freedom, justice, courage, humility, patience, industriousness, thriftiness, generosity, objectivity, cooperation, moderation, optimism.** (p. 90) With the exception of "objectivity," this list sounds very much like the "top twenty-five" values found in basal readers of 100 years ago (Andrews, 1994).

As compelling as the notion of teaching these virtues is to many individuals and groups, critics of character education find fault with lists of character traits like these, as did Lockwood (1991): "The major problem with lists is that they do not provide such clear guidelines for behavior as many character educators would lead us to believe." (p. 257) However, some school projects have at least moved from "lists" of virtues to open discussion of those virtues in classrooms. For example, Kuhmerker (1992) reported on the Heartwood Project developed for elementary public-school students in Pittsburgh. In this program, classic children's stories from around the world were categorized according to seven universal values: **courage, loyalty, justice, respect, hope, honesty, and love.** The program's activity cards developed for classroom use give suggestions for defining the virtues and "implementing" them. Many teachers and researchers, however, have been less than enthusiastic about this "prepackaged" approach to teaching values. They advocate, instead, a "process approach."

2. *A Process Approach: The Classroom as a Context for Values Clarification*

Opponents of moral education based on some set of fixed or core values are believers in the *process* of coming to know one's values--values clarification. Process educators believe that the fundamental error of traditional approaches to values education cited above is that it results indocrination; none of us, they argue, has the only "right" set of values to pass on to other people's children. The values clarification movement in education in the '60s and '70s was predicated on the belief that values were totally relative to culture and personal preference. That begin the case, no set of values could be taught or promoted without offending someone. In this approach, therefore, the teacher was to promote growth, freedom, and ethical maturity, beginning with the recognition that there is no right or wrong answer to any question of values. Textbooks of that era were systematically stripped of references to church, God, marriage, and the role of religion in history or current events.

Kohlberg (1971), although he subscribed to a process approach, rejected the values-clarification approach as being too relativistic and unlikely to result in justice. He was interested in moral development that would result in justice for all people. He believed that human beings progress through stages of moral development, and that it is much more important to emphasize *how* children and adults understand and justify the values they hold, than it is to develop lists of values to inculcate. Kohlberg believed that children cannot develop moral insight if they are not given choices and opportunities for dialogue on issues that are meaningful and difficult. He demonstrated that the progression through the stages of development can be supported by classroom processes for stimulating moral judgment in children, in combination with the more direct character education approach (Kohlberg, 1976). We interpret Kohlberg to have meant that without choices in the classroom and the opportunity to discuss the dilemmas inherent in any problem-solving approach to controversy, children cannot connect first-hand experience with the meanings of trust, the purpose of honor, the usefulness of loyalty; hence, the values remain only "passed-down," second-hand, whether from parents, peers, larger society, or the teacher.

The classroom, then, can become a moral community, in which children in their moral development can be sustained and facilitated through an integrated approach to values enquiry. The classroom process itself can embody elements both of core values teaching (product) and moral development (process). Aspects of both approaches are essential for education in a democratic society.

3. An Integrated Approach: The Classroom as a Moral Community

If we accept prepackaged programs aimed at transmitting lists of moral basics, we then are in danger of a narrow parochialism. If we accept the sociological definition of values and a values-clarification approach, then values are nothing more than the customs of particular groups, and there is no core of consistent and worthy values to be transmitted. What approach to values education, what instructional method, is consistent with the principles of an ideally just and democratic society? What curriculum and method are appropriate for purposes of educating students to take their place among a just and compassionate citizenry?

Even despite hearty and heartfelt disagreement over the idea of teaching "core values," can any thinking person believe that there are no core values inherent in human beings? We share common moral ground by virtue of the very fact that we are human. Rushworth Kidder (1994), President of the Institute for Global Ethics has written a book on global ethics. On his research for this book, he reported:

> [A]gain and again is this century, America and the world have stumbled over ethical relativism. All ethics, we have been told, is merely situational. All moral values are culturally determined, constantly up for grabs, and wholly subjective. So (it has been asserted) ethics is a mere plaything for the cultural elite, a luxury with no bearing on the "real" world. Teachable? Not at all, says this view: After all, whose values would you dare to teach, since each person has his or her own?
>
> Put that question to wise people around the world--ask then whether moral values are merely relative--and you nearly get laughed out of town. *Of course*, they say, there is a handful of moral precepts we all share--not because we're born into this or that culture, or hold this or that political view, but because we're human. (p. 3)

Kidder put this question to "ethical thinkers and actors" (as judged by their peers) around the world: *If there could be a global code of ethics for the 21st century, what would be on it?* He

asked Muslims, Buddhists, and Christians, men and women, liberals and conservatives. Of these interviews, he wrote as follows:

> From the scores of moral values mentioned in these interviews, eight of them came up so consistently that they surely belong on anyone's list of global core values:
>
> •Love (which some called caring or compassion)
> •Truth (honesty or integrity)
> •Freedom (liberty)
> •Fairness (justice or equity)
> •Unity (a sense of community or wholeness)
> •Tolerance (respect for diversity)
> •Responsibility (accountability)
> •Respect for life (avoidance of killing) (p.3)

If, then, there is a near-core of human values worthy to be taught to students, what instructional methodology best promotes context or strategies for this moral instruction? Many researchers and educational theorists have responded to this question. John Dewey (1966) believed that America could not survive simply by perpetuating its institutions, but that democracy is a moral ideal that depends on particular values and specific modes of education. Jean Piaget (1956) also believed that blind obedience to the authority and will of the teacher stultified intellectual and moral development, and that peer relations, more than teacher intervention, fostered mutual respect and rule-governed behavior. Both Dewey and Piaget saw students--even young ones--as collaborators in their own moral development. Collaboration implies a change in teaching methods from mere transmission of information to joint research and exploration in the classroom.

Specific values are best taught not in the abstract or apart from a demonstration of values, but by following a method that enhances content through posing moral dilemmas, matters of import, hot issues, and controversies. The instructional successes enjoyed by the 5th grade classes described below, were due largely to the implementation of these collaborative measures. The next part of this paper summarizes the grant we wrote to implement research done by Andrews(1994) and Gosa (1977).

The grant project we initiated in the spring of 1994 sought to promote *democratic* and *social values* such as informed *decision-making, freedom with responsibility, justice*, and a strong *work ethic* for 60+ fifth grade students at a Houston intermediate school. A needs assessment revealed

the following statistical information regarding the student population of the school:

* Student population of 1,037
* 44.2% African American
* 34.1% Hispanic
* 20.4% White
* 1.3% Other
* 65% live in apartments
* 71% are identified as economically disadvantaged (free and reduced lunch)
* 53% are identified as at-risk
* 16% are English as a Second Language students
* 14% receive special education services
* 5% are identified as gifted and talented

It is obvious from the high "at-risk" indicators that the population can benefit from a program that stresses informed decision-making and responsibility. Many of the students attending Escort live in single-parent households or with extended family members where joblessness or low income are evident and are considered economically disadvantaged. Because many of the school's students have been mobile throughout their lives, it has been difficult for them to develop and maintain pride in their community. The lack of responsible, sensible, hard-working models to look up to and reflect is evident.

We decided on the following methods and activities as a reasonable backdrop to the learning of democratic and social values in the classroom:

Learning classroom routines: order, discipline, and functioning of the classroom. In this setting, the students will be given choices about their learning. This classroom will reflect the kinds of structures that allow freedom, choice, decision-making, goal setting and goal achievement by the children.

Dialogue journals: written reflections of students' roles and responsibilities in the classroom, school, and community. Students will write daily reflections on experiences in their own lives related to discussions in class from current events or literature. Teacher and classmates will be given the opportunity to write back in response to ideas and thoughts.

Working in learning teams: students will work collaboratively on chosen topics. This type of collaboration will foster mutual tolerance,
respect, compromise. Students will respond respectfully to opinions and ideas generated by others in their learning team.

Literature circles: students will choose from among a variety of novels recommended for the study of values by Sharon V. Andrews (1994) in her book *Teaching Kids to Care: Stories, Strategies, and Structures for Values Teaching in Elementary and Middle School.* Bloomington, IN: ERIC/ENDINFO Press. The bibliography developed by Dr. Andrews, categorizes books by values (eg., responsibility, honesty, work ethic, patience, temperance, compassion).

Read-alouds: the teacher will read books and conduct related discussions on issues of values and character. In literature groups and read-alouds, students will listen for and reflect upon examples of values and character in these books. These examples will be written in a "Random Acts" journal to be kept throughout the year.

Action research projects: students will do action research projects on values using newspaper articles and local events. Students will discuss and analyze the motivations for actions and the alternatives to poor decision-making that may be found in these articles and events.

School/Community projects: A school project (eg., planting flowers, tutoring programs, book collections) and community action projects (eg., painting over graffiti, mentoring a young child, volunteering), will be determined by students and teachers following the study of local events and problems.

This program did not impose values on the children, but rather it provided a meaningful context for the thinking through and daily application of values that have been discussed, examined, debated, and investigated in children's literature and their daily lives at school.. This kind of concentrated exploration of values has not indoctrinated students, but rather it has provided a school context for discussion and implementation of democratic and social values and has helped students to become aware of choices and consequences. Becoming better citizens and better persons is becoming integral to the life of the classroom, not an artificial add-on imposed by Martin. Many of the goals and objectives we outlined for the project have been fulfilled.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

We continue to believe that many students today are not ready to benefit from choice and decision-making in school because they have little discipline, little respect for themselves and others, and lack of a motivating learning environment either at home or at school. Therefore, we, in this first semester have endeavored to put *first things first* by providing a context in which students can benefit from choices. What we have done in the classroom, unlike many pre-packaged "values curricula," is to make the learning of personal values integral in the daily life of the classroom, thus shaping responsible, productive citizens.

Goal . To establish a program that promotes democratic and social values for 60+ fifth grade students.

Objective 1. Students will engage in informed decision-making.

Objective 2. Students will develop a strong work ethic.

Objective 3. Students will become more self-disciplined.

Objective 4. Students will develop a better self-image and increased self-esteem.

Objective 5. Students and the teacher will have high expectations for student performance.

The **Goal** and its objectives have been accomplished in the following ways that reflect a developmental progression of understanding of values and their demonstration:

• At the beginning of the school year students were undisciplined and disrespectful of teachers and each other. Through a process of disciplining with respect and maintaining strict rules and boundaries, students have learned to express values of self-discipline, order. This process took approximately 4-6 six weeks at the beginning of the school year. Although academic work was being accomplished during this time, the major focus was self-discipline. Rather than focus on "points" for behavior (a practice that defeats efforts as self-discipline), students earned "thinking points." The thinking points were given for good ideas, thoughts, research.. For example: Ruben was given a thinking point for finding the word **utopia** in his comic book and bringing it to the attention of the class. Karla was given a thinking point for going to the library and finding books about homelessness and doing some research to share with her class. Donald thought of making a story describing his "utopia" with words and pictures by using a key to show what the pictures meant. Martin used to decide who should get a thinking point, now the students have begun to decide. The students enjoy the board and now are empowered to make the decisions of who belongs on it and work together to make it to the board and congratulate and support the ones who earn the thinking points.

• In order to learn the social values of cooperation and teamwork, students have worked in learning teams. They have worked collaboratively on chosen topics. This has fostered mutual tolerance, respect, compromise. Students have learned to respond respectfully to opinions and ideas generated by others in their learning team. Students now work well in teams and are very supportive of each other. "***Reflective Literature Logs***" supported the development of cooperative skills. (See Appendix A). After choosing the book groups were going to read, students developed a literature notebook in which they kept track of decisions being made by characters, vocabulary, questions and comments, a what's up section where they took notes of happenings in the books. Many of the discussions that groups had were taped and students had the chance to listen to themselves and evaluate not only their discussions, but their social skills. Many times our class discussions focused not only on the books, but on our ability to listen to others without interrupting, accepting another persons opinion of the story, or listening for times when we helped another person in our group, support.

• The students have kept "***Personal Reflective Journals***" to record instances of "familial love," "work ethic," "consequences of right and wrong," "cooperation andteamwork." Students record these examples from their own reading, from class read-alouds. Fig. 1 shows examples of the student's early reflections on qualities of thought and actions that effect their lives.

[insert Fig. 1]

• Decision-making has been a major focus in Martin's classes and this particular aspect of our learning permeates everything we do. Decision-making relates to time use, achievement of goals, doing of homework, being task-oriented in the classroom. In order to expand our understanding of decision-making and its consequences without imposing particular values on the students, we have used literature to analyze motivations, decisions, and consequences of actions by characters in books. For their work in literature circles, students have chosen from among a variety of novels recommended for the study of values by Sharon V. Andrews (1994) in her book *Teaching Kids to Care: Stories, Strategies, and Structures for Values Teaching in Elementary and Middle School.* Bloomington, IN: ERIC/ENDINFO Press. The bibliography developed by Dr. Andrews, categorizes books by values (eg., responsibility, honesty, work ethic, patience, temperance, compassion). Fig. 2 and 3 show the beginnings of analysis of characters in novels, recording only the decisions and the consequences.

[insert Fig. 2 and 3]

The next step was to expand the analysis of character's decisions in novels and to develop our own decision-making charts, considering both character's decisions and our own actions in terms of motivations and consequences to ourselves and others. Tables 1 and 2 reflect the students thinking on these tasks.

[insert Tables 1. and 2.]

Students have become more aware that they have choices and that their choices effect themselves and others; that they are part of a family, a classroom, a community and that their acts do not exist alone but effect others for good or ill.

The final step for this school year has been the development of charts entitled "***Categorization of Characters' in Novels by Kohlberg's Stages***" and "***Categorization of Personal Decisions by Kohlberg's Stages.***" Tables 3 and 4 show the students analysis of stages of moral growth in fictional characters and in themselves.

[insert Tables 3 and 4]

The student were reading The Giver by Lois Lowry at the time these charts were initiated. The following notes reflect the students thinking about an activity related to this book.

* "A Day of Sameness" reflections: After reading Chapter 12 in "The Giver" and having discussions about things that are the same and what they do not like that is the same and what they do not like that is the same, students experienced a day of "sameness" to show how Jonas must feel in the society in which he lives. They also were able to sense the good an bad points of sameness as well as the freedoms they are given. They all wore blue pants, jeans or shorts, and a white T-shirt, used the same yellow number two pencil and had to walk in a straight line with their hands over their hearts. When given instructions, they had to respond by saying, "Yes, Instructor

Martin". During a discussion of how they felt about the day, many commented on liking the attention they were getting from other teachers and adults. The reflection pieces that were written focused on why the experience was good and why the students liked the day. Here are some quotes from students: Maggie-I remembered that in Mexico the students in school wore uniforms. Liliana-Nobody told you that you had ugly clothes because our class was identical. LaQuindria-Nobody had to say that they had on something better than another person because we were all wearing the same thing. We are the same inside as the people in the book, but we live differently that they do. Allison-Dressing the same made me confused. It also made me realize what a pain it would be to dress the same every day. Donald-We got a chance to enter Jonas' world and to discover how weird it would be (the teachers that hadn't read the book did, too.) Alicia-It was neat wearing the same thing as all of your classmates. In our world, everyone dresses differently, has a different shade of color, and looks different. For one day we were all one. Melody-I disliked it because I did not get any individual compliments about my clothing because we all looked the same. Fabiola-Being like everyone else made us all think like each other. Ruben-Instead of calling our class the classroom, we called it our learning community. Joseph-I got released because I did not wear a white t-shirt and some jeans. Marion-The characters in the book think they live in a utopia, but our class does not. It was a good experience because we got to act out what happened in our book. Some people who don't get a lot of compliments very often did this time. Instead of their self-esteem going down, it went up. Larry-I disliked it because we had to write with the same pencil. I hate yellow pencils, it's not my color. We had to do everything with that yellow pencil. I did like the part when we saw the other people that looked the same as us.

* This reflection was followed by a taped discussion where students elaborated more on the day. Most agree that they would like to do it again.

School/Community Projects were the logical outcome of a developmental program in values teaching. The classes visited and work at a homeless shelter and began a recycling program Students have written homeless poems, questioning other people's ideas of homelessness, writing from the perspective of a homeless person, or writing about how they feel about homeless people. A group has begun school-wide recycling program. Students stay after school to collect newspapers and plan program.

This year-long project and the resulting classroom environment has begun to embody and exemplify the "SCANS" Classroom described in a recent report from Washington, D.C., *A SCANS Report for America 2000 (1992).* Specific classroom descriptors from the report that currently describe Martin's classroom are:

* Students routinely work with Ms Martin and their peers in her classroom. They still need to work on exemplifying qualities of cooperation and teamwork in their other classes.
* Students and teachers plan and negotiate activities. (Donna, anything here?)
* Students engage in self-assessment. (Describe how)
* Subjects are integrated and provide a context for problem-solving, reasoning, and decision-making. (refer to above or describe here)
* Thinking involves real situations for problem-solving, reasoning, and decision-making rather than "textbook" situations. (describe or is this really part of the inquiry coming up?)
* Students learn to be responsible, sociable, independent; integrity and honesty are part of the social context of the classroom; students' self-esteem increases because they are in charge of their own learning. (give some examples)

Discussion

• ***Group Processes as a Context for Building Values***

The processes of group inquiry, teamwork, and process-writing developed compromise, notions of consensus building, mutual support, shared decision-making, interpersonal reasoning, and perseverance. Encouraging and supporting group work and discussion in the elementary classroom will go a long way towards fostering cooperation rather than competition, supportive critique of peers rather than criticism, and a sense of belonging to a working democracy. The current literature is full of talk about "cooperative" learning. I prefer to refer to this kind of curriculum structure as collaborative because no idea fostered through group-work belongs exclusively to one person. Learners are not merely working side by side on their separate tasks; they are working together on a common task. They are mutually engendering new thoughts, plans, projects, and actions that could not come about if the individual were working alone. The result is different from what it would have been if the group members were merely cooperating side-by-side. Though a specific idea may occur to one person who then shares it, the impetus and the environment for that idea is the group, and its working out and perfecting is the common property of all. Emphasis of this point with students builds respect for group work and for themselves as they acknowledge and benefit from the ideas of their colleagues in collaboration. (Andrews, 1994, p. 12)

• **Children: Their Role and Their Rights in Constructing the Knowledge Base for Values**

From 150 to 200 years ago, children in schools were essentially passive recipients of knowledge. Memorization and recitation of lessons from the teacher and the textbook were the primary means by which they learned. A glance into many classrooms today would reveal that the standard mode of teaching and learning--reading, note-taking, recitation, and testing--is still essentially what it has ever been: Our classrooms, generally, do not show a significant difference in operation from classrooms of 100 years ago. (See Cuban, 1984, 1988; Mayer and Brause,

1986). Schooling is changing somewhat; student choice and decision-making is altering the role of the child from that of passive recipient of knowledge to active constructor of his or her own understandings of the world and relationships.

Ought children to learn how to support their opinions, listen to others, debate, and cite their sources? Undoubtedly. Ought they to acknowledge others' rights to their own opinions? Of course. Ought they to think humanely about the planet and the fellow creatures living on it? No question. Today we would get very few negative responses to these questions. We are beginning to recognize that compassionate understanding of others in our global village, growing smaller and smaller as its population grows larger and larger, cannot wait for the dispassionate reasoning of politically correct adulthood.

Contrary to many theorists opinions of children as self-centered beings who revolve in their own orbits, Piaget (1965) and others believed that young children quickly develop a sense of industry, care, and fairness. Kohlberg (1985) believed that children will develop these virtues when given the environment, practice in, and support for moral decision-making. Are elementary-school children too young and immature to deal compassionately with serious issues? Many children deal daily and personally with abuse, neglect, divorce, homelessness, and if they do not deal with these issues on a personal level, they witness violence and social conflict on television. Although some very conservative parent groups want only "the basics" taught, I believe that it is naive to think that children should not be "exposed" to the serious issues of our time in school for they have already been exposed if they are alive and aware. Because they have already been exposed to moral threat, the school's role becomes very much more important in teaching them to think as active, concerned citizens whose hearts, hands, and minds can actively engage in improving their own reality and the larger community. This is, in fact, what parents ultimately want, and what the state requires.

Given the relatively defenseless nature of children and our responsibility for their welfare in school, how can we educate them to desired values while protecting them from indoctrination into

political or religious beliefs which their parents and other community members might find objectionable? Stakeholders in schools may not agree on which textbooks and curriculum guides inculcate the best values or provide the most freedom of expression, but we, the parents, acting as we, the people, have, through the courts, insisted that schools may not indoctrinate students in a particular political or religious viewpoint.

David Moshman (1989) argued that the only safeguard we have for continued protection against use of public schools for indoctrination is a principled commitment to children's First Amendment rights. His argument leaves the reader with two pressing questions: *What will become of us if we fail to transmit the knowledge, values, and principles that have brought us this far? and, conversely, What will become of us if, in our zeal to inculcate, we blindly cast a pall of orthodoxy over the future?* (p. 187). Schools can meet this challenge by opening to children a forum for thinking, growing, and becoming compassionate, responsible citizens. How? Through inquiry curriculum with a compassionate teacher, we can declare a forum for critical thinking in which students learn to ask, "How do past and present values, views, and decisions affect me, my neighbors, and the planet?

• The Child as a Moral Thinker

Kohlberg (1976) posed "moral dilemmas" in his research on moral development and developed a "stage theory" of moral development. His research convinced him that people typically develop over time in their understanding of justice and morality, and that stages are evident in this growth:

Stage 1: Avoid punishment.
Stage 2: Look for a reward.
Stage 3: Watch out, someone won't approve.
Stage 4: Consider the consequences for society.
Stage 5: Respect everyone's rights.
Stage 6: Act on your own principles of conscience.

Stages 1 and 2 dominate children's actions during the primary years, but after that they vary, and some progress more rapidly than others through the stages. The point here in considering the work in Martin's classroom is not so much to determine which stage of moral

development the children were demonstrating, but rather to appreciate that the curriculum was allowing for the practice of moral thinking and deliberation. (Andrews, p. 15)

• **Grappling with Tough Issues: The heart of a values-oriented curriculum**

Is conflict necessary for learning? The study of controversial issues becomes the engine for the development of values. Instead of pretending that we can eliminate conflict from teaching and learning, let us make use of it. Conflict and well-informed debate is applicable to any learning setting. A child of any age child can be presented with problems that are identified and felt as problems by the students themselves. If an issue is of sufficient interest to the students, they will tackle opposing viewpoints and meanwhile learn to think through their own and the differing perspectives.

Teachers, like everyone else, do not have simple answers to these questions. Complex problems worthy of study do not allow for simple black-and-white answers that can be learned and fed to students in incremental doses and then evaluated by a true/false test. Does that mean we should not study serious areas of moral and ethical concern in schools? Quite the contrary, these are exactly the substance of a curriculum in which enquiring students and compassionate teachers together can learn to honor honest differences of opinion--the essence of democracy. The classroom becomes a place in which participants learn the importance of coming to their task of decision-making with informed perspectives. They learn the importance of negotiating ideas, of learning when to compromise and when not, and, then, of getting along with people with whom they seriously disagree. Where, if not in schools, will students learn that the complex issues that face us today are many-sided, and that respect and responsibility for one another's words and actions are necessary components of our daily lives? Complex issues are usually uncomfortable ones for the classroom just as they are for society, but they provide hearty fare for learning. How do complex issues emerge for discussion? How do students develop a stake in learning about them? Inquiry projects chosen by the students energize that motivation. (Andrews, 1994, pp. 24-25)

Educational Importance: A Summary

In recent years, the necessity for including opportunities for values education in classrooms has generated some *pre-packaged materials* which purport to give the classroom teacher adequate training and curriculum for delivering values education--a "**product** approach" to values education. However, this pre-packaged material falls short of the ideal setting and content necessary for integrated, meaningful learning (Harste, Short, Burke, 1988; Kohlberg, 1984). "**Process** approaches" to values education have been the *values clarification* movement resulting in a very much values-relative curriculum and an *intergrated values approach* that combines elements of product and processes approaches. We embrace an integrated approach based on democratic classroom practices. Conflict resolution (as well as other values) and the critical thinking skills that accompany it are actually the outcome of curriculum which involves student choice and personal inquiry in a democratic social learning environment (Andrews, 1994; Andrews, et al., 1993)--an "integrated process approach" to values education.

Popular and award winning children's literature critiqued in light of major social issues provides a natural vehicle for development of values and critical thinking skills: comparison and contrast, analysis and synthesis, convergent and divergent thinking, problem solving, and development of criteria for weighing choices and outcomes. Research on values in children's literature--particularly conflict resolution--and children's understandings of those values have been little researched. The classroom discussed in this paper has offered a practical approach and an exploration of this issue.

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Epilogue: The Creative Potential of the Caring Classroom

*On The Day I Was Born, Debra Fraser- After reading this book, students discussed the pride, love, joy, etc. that must have entered the lives of their family on the day they were born. We discussed what might have happened in nature to show the beauty of their birth. Students were then invited to write their own "On the Day I was Born" piece. It was wonderful to see the support they gave each other. The pieces were just beautiful. I wish you could see them all. I would like you to see one and imagine Jason, who gets in trouble a bit more than he needs to.

On the day I was born....
The sun beamed.
Over this little planet we call earth.
And a beautifully, glamorous, extraordinary rainbow...
Shot from state to state,
As far as an imagination could think of.
And birds of all kinds chirped,
And squawked wherever they flew.
The flowers broke through the earth's soil...
Like a hot knife through butter,
And bloomed into some of the most exquisite
Daisies, dandelions, buttercups, violets, and roses,
You might have ever had a glance at.
And the little small trees...
Grew into gigantic, huge, enormous,
Tall oak trees,
And the strangest thing about it was...
That on the tallest tree...
My name - Jason Lee Valdes,
Was carved.

Fig. 1 Personal Reflective Journals

Home/Family/Familiar Love

* Just last night I went to the bathroom and looked at all of the make-up my mom wears. I wanted to put the make-up on, but I knew it wasn't right. I did it anyway. My mom was getting worried so she came to the bathroom and started knocking. I knew I wasn't going to be able to take the make-up off, so I just opened the door and told her I had been putting her make-up on. She told me she was going to spank me, but she didn't. She told me that if I start to put make-up on, my face would look ugly and all the boys would start to like me and bother me. I knew that if she didn't love me, she would let me wear all the make-up I wanted. I'm lucky that she loves me so much. She told me I could wear make-up when I am 15 years old.

Fablola

* I feel happy when my grandma hugs me and kisses me on my head. She is letting me know that she loves me and that she cares for me, and that makes me glad that someone feels that way about me.

Chris

* One day I was going to ride the bus to the mall, but I didn't tell my mom because I'm not supposed to ride the bus by myself. I was about to get on the bus when my mom yelled that I was not allowed to ride the bus alone until I was fifteen. She stopped me because she cares about me and loves me.

Oswaldo

* Sometimes when I go to school after waking up on the wrong side of the bed (that's what Ms. Martin says), I am grouchy. Then I get in trouble. Teachers are only giving me conduct marks because they care about me.

Alicia

* My best friend at school is Larry. He is black, nice, and has short hair.

Michael

Work Ethic

* I had to get money because I broke our neighbor's window. I had to work hard and fast to earn the money. I washed cars and sold punch and picked up cans of coke to go and recycle. I earned the money to pay so the people who repair windows could repair it. I got the money and even had $2.36 left.

LaQuindria

* Yesterday I went to the house we are going to rent. We worked so hard out in the sun, and I had black pants on. I cleaned the oil stains out of the garage and then took an hour to get all of the water away. I went home and fell asleep. I was tired after working so hard.

Juan

Consequences of Right and Wrong Doing

* When I went to my first period class, I forgot to do my homework for the second time. When Ms. Martin called for homework, I told her I forgot mine. Ms. Martin was disappointed, so my consequence was to call my mom.

Jorge

* A few weeks ago we had a test in music. I was not allowed to talk for two days. Believe me, it was not easy to not talk for one hour each day. Even though some kids say it's easy to not talk, it isn't for me. I stayed quiet for two whole days. Somehow I did it and got an "E" in conduct. I was proud of myself. It was a good consequence.

Edwin

* Yesterday I got in trouble for going outside without permission. My mom was mad and said that I needed to listen and that the next time I go outside without permission, I will be grounded.

Karla R.

* When I was three years old, I remember picking my baby brother Justin up and trying to feed him myself while my mom was asleep and my dad was at work. When my mother woke from sleeping and Dad got home, they saw me and thought I was hurting him. Then, they saw that I was feeding him and started letting me feed him more, but only when they were watching.

Jason

Reading/Writing/Schooling

* One day when I was in the fourth grade, my teacher Mrs. Raposa gave me some vocabulary words to study. I thought that it was dumb and I did not study. On the next day we had a test. I got most of them wrong. I learned that we need to study to make good grades and to also pass that grade.

Liliana

* One day I asked my sister to help me a little on my homework. She helped me with me homework first, even though she had her own to do. She shared time with me, too.

Karla H.

* When I was in the third grade and we were reading out of the fourth grade book, there were a lot of words I had never heard of. My teacher picked me to read out of the book first and I messed up big time. So that night I went to my house and studied out of the dictionary every word I could remember that came out of that book. The next day I was ready. When it was my turn, I amazed the teacher.

Marlon

Cooperative/Teamwork

* I have been cooperating everyday in my literature group. We are reading The Green Book and are helping each other write in our literature folders and are talking about the book. I like my group members.

Melody

Fig. 2 Decisions of Characters in Novels
(From literature folders developed by students reading Shoeshine Girl by Clyde Robert Bulla)

Character	Decision
Sarah Ida	Weather she should work for Al or not
Rossi Next door neibor	Rossi had to decide if she wanted to give Sarah Ida some money.
Al Shoe Shine Man!	had to makea decision wether he had to close the store or not when it was finna Rain.
Sarah Ida	had to decide weather to keep the stand open for Al
Donnas Al's Wife	She decided to see Al at the hospital
Aunt Claudia	She had to decide weather Sarah Ida should run the stand while Al is in the hospital

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Fig. 3 Decisions of Characters in Novels
(From literature folders developed by students reading Park's Quest by Katherine Patterson)

Characters	Decision
Park	he wanted to run away.
Park	he went to the Vietnam Memorial to see his dads name.
Frank	He wanted to take Park to his farm
Mrs. Davenport	She had to decide whether to tell Frank and Park that Frank has a daughter.
Randy	She had to whether stop Park from running away.
Park	To whether go to the Vietnam Memorial to see his fathers name.
Mrs. Winslow	She knows about Park's favorite book.
Park	He wanted to know "how and why" his father died!"

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Table 1 Consequences of Character's Decisions

Character	Decision	Action	Consequences for Self	Consequences for Others
Ned from One-Eyed Cat by Paula Fox	Whether to tell someone about shooting a shadow.	He went through agony before telling anyone about his crisis. He finally told his mother.	He thought he was going to get in trouble because he shot a cat but his mother understood what had happened. He did not get punished. He did feel guilty and worried.	The shadow that Ned shot was a cat named Aurora. Aurora lost her eye because of his decision.
All characters from The Green Book by Jill Patton Walsh	What book to bring with them to the planet shine.	They took a dictionary, Robinson Crusoe, a diary (The Green Book) and other books.	They all had a book to read to pass the time. They got tired of reading the same books.	They all got to read Pattie's book that was a journal of their adventures on the planet Shine.
All characters from The Green Book by Jill Patton Walsh	To go to the planet shine or stay on the polluted earth.	They took an old space ship to the planet Shine.	They had to stay in the spaceship for four birthdays. They could only take one book and one picture and other small things. They would survive.	The people that had to stay on earth probably died because of all of the pollution.
Matt from Sign of the Beaver by Elizabeth George Speare	To join the Indian tribe or stay at the cabin and wait for his parents.	He didn't join the tribe.	He spent time with the tribe and learned new things.	Attean learned to read.

Table 2 Consequences of Personal Decisions

My Name	Decision	Action	Consequences for Self	Consequences for Others
Travis	My decision was to hang with the right person or the wrong crowd.	Ms. Martin and Ms. Downham gave me advice about who to hang with.	He put pressure on my to get into trouble. I picked Donald, Adrian, Fabiola, Michael, Allison, Maggie, and Liliana to be friends with.	Other people in my class were disrupted from learning.
Chris	Whether to steal from Stop N Go or not to steal.	I went with my friend and I got caught.	My mom and dad punished me for a very long time.	My mom and dad got a consequence because I let them down and they did not trust me anymore.
Fabiola	Whether to take Ms Martin's book, One-Eyed Cat, to my house.	I took it and only read 2 or 3 pages. Now it is lost.	I had to give Ms. Martin $3.90 to pay for the lost book.	Ms. Martin is upset about the book.
Liliana	Whether to go to school when I had a bodyache.	I decided not to go because it started to hurt more.	I would miss my teachers and have homework for the next day.	My mom would have to stay in the house with me and not go shopping.
Benjamin	To throw a shoe at my brother.	I threw the shoe and broke the window.	I felt good about telling my dad.	My dad had to pay for the window.
Repheal	To admit to the teacher that I was throwing wet toilet tissue on the wall and making it stick.	I did not tell the teacher.	I felt guilty but didn't get in trouble.	Another boy got blamed.
LaQuindria	Whether to stay at my dad's house or at home with my mother for Christmas.	I decided to stay with my mom, but went to my dad's house to pick up my present.	I was feeling very upset because I did not go to my dad's house to stay.	I made my dad feel sad because I did not go to his house.
Donald	Whether to throw the bean bag up too high in P.E.	I did it and it hit the ceiling.	I had to sign the book and when I got home, I got in deep trouble.	The school lost a $5.00 bean bag because of me. They lost it because it got stuck in the ceiling after I threw it up.

Table 3 Categorization of Character Decisions by Kohlberg Stages

Character	Decision	Action	Motivation	Consequences for Self	Consequences for Others	Kohlberg Stage	Reasoning
Joel-On My Honor by Marion Dane Bauer	To go to the park. To tell that his friend Tony drowned in the river. To tell about going swimming in the river.	He lied about going to the mountains/river. He acted like nothing happened. Inside he felt upset, hurt, disappointed in himself and guilty.	He may have thought he would go to jail. He broke a promise to his father.	He had to finally tell the truth. He felt guilty for breaking the promise and for daring Tony to go swimming. He lost Tony as a friend. Joel still has a life to live.	Tony drowned. Tony's parents are sad because Tony is gone. Tony's parents are grieving. Joel's dad may feel responsible and Joel's parents may lose trust in Joel.	Watch out someone won't approve Avoiding punishment	Joel lied to his dad and then wouldn't admit to knowing what happened because he was afraid to lose his fathers trust and respect. He didn't tell his dad the truth because he didn't want the blame or punishment for going to the river with Tony.
Sarah Ida-Shoeshine Girl by Robert Clyde Bulla	Whether or not to work for Al.	Sarah Ida decided she would do it.	She knew he would pay her. She wanted to satisfy her aunt.	She got to work with Al. She got some money to spend. She learned that she won't always get tips. She learned manners and respect. She became responsible.	Al received complaints about Sarah Ida's work. Al got a worker to help him. Al lost money because he had to pay Sarah Ida. The customers did not get their shoes shined the way they wanted. Aunt Claudia was satisfied that Sarah Ida had become responsible.	Looking for a reward	She knew that if she worked for Al, she would get paid. She knew that if she did good work she would get a tip. **Even though she only wanted a reward, she ended up learning responsibility and good manners.**
Maxine- Almost Famous by David Getz	Whether to enter and win the Inventions of Children Contest. Whether to work with Toni.	She finally got to be friends with Toni and talked her into being her partner for the contest.	To become famous and appear on the Phil Donahue show.	She became Toni's friend. She got to be in the audience of the Phil Donahue show. She felt good about helping.	Watt was able to sleep at naptime. Her parents were happy and proud of her. Watt was able to remember what food to get from the refrigerator. Toni finally got a friend. Toni's grandmother now trusts Toni.	Looking for a reward	Maxine wants to be on the Phil Donohue show and wants to win the contest so that she can be famous.

Table 3 Categorization of Character Decisions by Kohlberg Stages

Character	Decision	Action	Motivation	Consequences for Self	Consequences for Others	Kohlberg Stage	Reasoning
The Elders of the Community - The Giver by Lois Lowry	To decide what assignments the new 12's are going to get.	To get together and talk about volunteer hours the 11's are doing. To give them "maybe" the assignment in which they do the most volunteering. To watch them and write down where they go. Check in slips for names. Research 11's. Maybe cameras film volunteer hours.	They want to give what they think is the best person for the job. The community will be PERFECT (Utopia).	They will get good caregivers for the community. They don't get a lot of rest because they are researching all of the time. They get to see how the elevens react to their assignments. The community will be better because of them.	Some 12's don't get a job that they like. Some get difficult assignments. All twelves get an assignment unless they don't complete volunteer hours. They learn responsibility. All the people are affected because elders may pick someone for a job who doesn't do their job right -or if they don't like their job.	Trying to help the community Acting for the benefit of the community (society)	They want the best for the community. Utopia
Sophie -BFG -by Roald Dahl	Whether to have the BFG mix a dream for the queen so she could stop the giants from eating people.	BFG mixed the dream(troggle humper-nightmare) - Sat on windowsill to talk w/queen when she awoke.	She wanted to stop the giants from eating human beans.	She'll get the queen to stop giants from eating human beans. She'll be scared on the windowsill. She got a nice dress from the princess to wear. She got to eat the royal breakfast. She was embarrassed about the BFG whizz popping..	The maid got scared and fainted and dropped the breakfast tray. The footmen had difficulty (to work extra hard) to get a table, chair and cutlery, and breakfast prepared. The queen got the chandelier broken. The Kingdom will be safe without giants. BFG can go to school. The Queen will spend a lot of money on food for BFG. Bigger population	Act on your principles of conscience Benefit of others	It is right to help the human beans and to protect the people. It is wrong for giants to eat human beans. Everyone can now be safe because giants are caught.

Table 3 Categorization of Character Decisions by Kohlberg Stages

Character	Decision	Action	Motivation	Consequences for Self	Consequences for Others	Kohlberg Stage	Reasoning
Jonas- The Giver by Lois Lowry	To give Gabriel memories about the sailboat, lake, etc. that he received from The Giver. Not to follow some of the rules.	Whispered to Gabriel and touched his back and gave him the memories - each night.	Jonas knew that if he gave the memories to Gabe, The Giver would not approve bacause Jonas would lose that memory.	Lose the memories breaking a rule/worried that he might be caught. Helping Gabe to sleep. Close relationship with Gabe. Trust with Gabe. Jonas won't be able to give all memories to the future receiver.	Gabe got the memories. Gabe is able to sleep at night. He might have experienced pain if Jonas gave him the memory of war. Future receiver- because Jones is giving the memories away to Gabe, the future receiver will only receive painful memories because Jonas gave all of the pleasant ones to Gabe.	Watch out someone won't approve	When Jonas was giving the memories to Gabe, he was in his room so no one would see. He also didn't tell anyone.
						Act on your own principles of conscience.	He thought it was right because he wanted Gabe to sleep. Maybe he thinks when Gabe grows up he can change things.
						Acting for the benefit of another	He thought it was right because he wanted Gabe to sleep. Maybe Gabe would be the future receiver.

Table 4 Categorization of Personal Decisions by Kohlberg Stages

My Name	Decision	Action	Motivation	Consequences for Self	Consequences for Others	Kohlberg Stage	Reasoning
Liliana	whether to give up my room to my grandma or not to	I gave it up because I love my grandma	My grandma would feel uncomfortable and I love her	I had to sleep with my sister and not have my own room	My grandma would have her own room and my sister would have to share her room with me	acting for the benefits of others	I gave my grandma the benefits of having her own room
Juan	To run from my house & lose my family.	I ran away for three days and felt sorry and lonely	I got mad at my parents because they wouldn't let me go to the skating ring.	I came back home to my house because I felt sorry & see my parents and I missed them.	my parents were worried.	Watch out someone might not approve	I knew my parents would not accepte it because it was wrong.
Joseph	Whether to go outside when my mother left	I went outside for 5 min	everybody was playing football and I like football	I got to play football and lose. I got in trouble because my brother told on me	My brother was laughing when he told on me. My mother was hollering at me	watch out someone won't approve	I disobeyed my mother when she told me not to go outside

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Appendix A Examples from Reflective Literature Logs

Home/Family/Familial Love

Title: Almost Famous *

Chapter: 17

Summary: When Maxie~~n~~ invented a pillow to solve the problem of dreams she then ~~we~~ she gave it to Walt wouldn't be scared of the doctor.

Title: The BFG

Pg: 84

Summary: catched a bad dream and didn't let it go to let the kids dream something bad.

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Appendix A cont. Examples from Reflective Literature Logs

Home/Family/Familial Love

Title: Somewhere in the darkness *

Ruby Page: 38

Summary: Jimmy said to go to the mirror and see how they look together.

Title: Somewhere in the darkness

Page 33

Summary: Crab said he is taking Jimmy because he wants to have a family in Chicago By Ruby V. Per 9

Title: Somwhere in the darkness

Page 35

Summary: mama Jean started crying when she was starting packing Jimmy's clothes.

Title: Somewhere in the darkness

Page: 39

Summary:

Tittle: Sarah Plain and Tall

Page: 48

Chisbers Maggie Silva

Tille: Shoeshine girl

Page 813

Summary: Thats so sweet said Sarah Jo.

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Appendix A cont. Examples from Reflective Literature Logs

Consequences of Right and Wrong Doing

Tittle: Somewere in the darkness. *

Page: 14

Summary: That boy was messing around with the other boy at lunch time and he that other boy cut him

Karla Ramos

Tittle: The war With Grandpa

Page: 54

Summary: Pete woke up and wanted to declare war with his grandpa.

By: Ruby

Tittle: The War With Grandpa

page: 59

by: Karla Hernandez

Summary: When pete wrote the two letttlers and his grandpa thoog-ht it was a joke but, his grandpa was kinda of mad at pete.

Tittle: The War With Grandpa

page: 59

Summary: Pete said I Love you to grandpa but he said the war is steelon.

By Ruby

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